

Or she will start to speak  
and they will come  
rushing beautifully out,  
like trout  
over a falls.

She wants dishware  
with fish fired  
into them. She is always  
showing them a thigh,  
luring them on.

Ask her who, what,  
they are, and she dives  
openmouthed and innocent  
away. But these  
fish-stories circulate:

they have been known  
to live years on  
dry land; for counting  
on sleepless nights,  
they can leap over a life.

-- Philip Dacey

Cottonwood, MN

CHARLES! CHARLES!

Calling my name, you come running  
thru the tall grasses  
6-month bellyful of manchild  
plums falling from your apron  
and the wasps running  
up and down  
    inside your dress.

Blackburn Lake

An occasional fish leaps  
at a mayfly flittering by,  
so I roll a cigarette  
forget the next five minutes  
and the busy highway  
    fifty yards away  
where I've either gotta thumb  
or walk nine miles home  
in the rain.